CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 24 August 1990, at 5 p.m.

President: Mr. Gheorghe Chirila (Romania)

GE.90-62616/4533a

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 576th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. In keeping with its programme of work, the Conference will today consider and adopt the reports of the ad hoc subsidiary bodies and the annual report to the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I wish to inform you that for this plenary meeting the secretariat has placed on the tables document CD/NGC.22, concerning communications received from non-governmental organizations and persons; document CD/8/Rev.3, which contains the rules of procedure of the Conference as amended at the 575th plenary meeting; and document CD/1036, which contains the decision on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament adopted at the same meeting. I should like to make the following statement concerning that decision in my capacity as President of the Conference: during the open-ended consultations, firstly, "there was consensus also on the need to encourage speakers to limit their interventions to 15 minutes each" and secondly, "all interventions welcomed as positive and constructive the procedure followed during the current session, according to which the applications of non-member States were considered together, and not one by one. Consensus existed in the hope that this practice would continue to be followed in future sessions with the same results".

The statement that I have just made will be reflected in the record of today's plenary meeting. The secretariat will add to the record of last Tuesday's meeting a footnote that will contain the text of the statement and indicate that the statement was made today concerning the decision adopted at the 575th plenary meeting.

As I announced earlier, I shall submit the reports of the Ad hoc Committees for adoption by the Conference in the order in which they were introduced by the Chairmen.

I propose that we proceed now to the adoption of the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, which is contained in document CD/1033. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts that report.

It was so decided.

We now have to adopt document CD/1035 containing the report of the Ad hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts that report.

It was so decided.

I have taken note of Ambassador Donowaki's willingness to make himself available to help in the process of informal consultations on the programme of work of the Ad hoc Committee. I should like to assure Ambassador Donowaki that I shall remain in close contact with him and the future President of the Conference on this matter.

(The President)

I now propose that we take up for adoption the report of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which is contained in document CD/1034. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts that report.

It was so decided.

That concludes the consideration of the reports of the Ad hoc Committees to the Conference.

We shall now continue the consideration and adoption of the report to the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The draft report is contained in documents CD/WP/388, 388/Corr.1, 391/Rev.3, 392/Rev.1, 393/Rev.2 and 394/Rev.1. The secretariat will fill in the blanks that have been left in the text of the draft report.

I submit to the Conference for adoption the draft report to the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly contained in the documents I have just mentioned. Does any delegation wish to take the floor before we adopt the report? I see none. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the annual report of the United Nations General Assembly.

It was so decided.

I give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Chadha.

Mr. CHADHA (India): I am making this statement on behalf of the Group of 21 on the report of the Ad hoc Committee on item 1 of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, namely "Nuclear test ban", which we have just adopted.

The mandate of the Ad hoc Committee represented a compromise which was made possible due to the spirit of accommodation shown by all groups. On its part, the Group of 21 had agreed to the mandate despite its strong feelings in favour of a stronger negotiating mandate in a spirit of give and take and in the earnest hope that the establishment of the Ad hoc Committee would mark the beginning of sincere efforts towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

So far the Committee has been able to hold only very preliminary discussions. Obviously, if the expectations which we have from the work of this Committee are to be fulfilled it will have to resume its work without delay at the commencement of the 1991 session of the Conference.

However, the Group of 21 notes with deep regret that, even before the Ad hoc Committee has agreed on a programme of work, doubts have been cast on its re-establishment at the beginning of the 1991 session. The Group of 21 expresses the hope that the delegations which are not yet in a position to commit themselves to the re-establishment of the Committee at the beginning of the 1991 session will reconsider their position and will join in our common endeavour towards the agreed goal of a comprehensive nuclear test ban.

Mr. HOU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, today under your able guidance we will have finally finished and adopted the final report to be submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations. It is the result of the joint efforts of all the delegations and the crystallization of the positive progress the CD has achieved in the year of 1990. At this juncture, when the work of the 1990 session of the CD is coming to a smooth conclusion, the Chinese delegation wishes to express its gratitude to you for the outstanding contribution you have made at the last stage of this session and to extend its congratulations to all the other delegations. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Hyltenius, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Shannon, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Outer Space, Ambassador Varga, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, Ambassador Cambiaso, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Security Assurances to Non-nuclear-weapon States, and Ambassador Donowaki, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, for the tremendous efforts they have made.

Our thanks also go to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Komatina, the Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, all staff members of the secretariat, and all the translators and interpreters, who have done a remarkable job in organizing and providing services to the entire summer session.

This year is the first year of the decade of the 1990s. It is also the first year of the third Disarmament Decade as proclaimed by the United Nations. The 1990 session of the CW was convened against the background of momentous changes in the international situation. The international community, therefore, placed high hopes on us. They expected us to make new contributions to the endeavour of putting an end to the arms race and promoting disarmament. Today, when we are taking a sober and objective stock of the work of the CD, we must be fair and point out that enormous useful work has been done and some positive results have been achieved at the CD this year. The determination of the entire international community to safeguard the completeness and thoroughness of the goal of the convention banning all chemical weapons has made it possible to usher our negotiations into an even more important stage. The re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban after an interregnum of seven years has given people new hope for the future. Many countries have shown greater concern over such major issues as the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the arms race in outer space, the promotion of disarmament and prevention of nuclear war. They have also advanced series of positive proposals and rational positions. Another encouraging phenomenon is that there are more and more non-member States participating or showing interest in the work of the CD. This year's consultations on the improved and effective functioning of the CD have yielded some preliminary results which constitute a good beginning for further consultations to be carried out next year from which people have reason to expect more substantive progress.

At the same time we also recognize with a sober mind that we have no reason to be satisfied with the results we have so far achieved. For these results fall far short of our expectations and the responsibilities entrusted to us. Due to reasons known to all, no substantive negotiations were carried out on a majority of the items on our agenda. It cannot be but regretted, in particular, that nuclear disarmament, which is a subject of common concern to

(Mr. Hou, China)

the entire international community, has not become the priority item on the agenda of the CD. The Chinese delegation is convinced that, if all delegations can attach adequate importance to the multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and manifest due political will and determination, the CD in its next session will be able to yield substantive results on these major issues, which, in turn, are bound genuinely to improve and strengthen the role of the CD as the sole global multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

Recently the evaluation of the results of the negotiations on the convention on chemical weapons has become a focus of much discussion. The Chinese delegation is of the view that, under the leadership of Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden, the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons has done a great amount of work and achieved some noticeable progress in the past year. For this we must give due credit and must not negate everything. The existence of some differences and disputes is nothing but normal. Truth fears no debate, which only marks a further deepening of the negotiations, if we face the differences squarely and try to overcome them. At the same time, we are fully aware of the new opportunities, as well as the grave challenges, the CD is faced with on its way to an early conclusion of a CW convention.

It is the view of the Chinese delegation that the practices at the CD have provided us with some useful experiences and ways to improve our work. First of all, we must bear in mind and persist with the ultimate aim of our negotiations, namely, a convention on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons. It is the only commonly shared basis for the negotiations on the convention, a basis which we laid down a long time ago. It is also the linchpin on which hinges the success or failure of our negotiations. Facts have shown that when we persist with this aim and maintain this basis, we will be able to move the negotiations forward and make new progress; if this aim is forgotten or tampered with, the nature of the convention will be changed and the basis of our negotiations shaken. That is bound to lead our negotiations astray. Undoubtedly, we must try our best to prevent this from happening. There is a Chinese saying which goes, "It is better to take one concrete step than make seven dozen hollow declarations".

The Chinese delegation also considers it important to grasp all the important issues in our negotiations and make reasonable overall arrangements so that they can be discussed in parallel with each other and in a balanced manner. Over the years we have spent a lot of time and energy on consultations concerning article IX. That is entirely necessary, but at the same time we must not lose sight of the fact that this issue cannot be dealt with separately and in isolation. Verification is not the only, much less the most important issue. The issue of the utmost importance is to guarantee that the prescribed nature and objective of the convention will not be changed, whereas verification is but a means, albeit an important one, to realize that objective. We must see not only the trees but also the forest, and must not overlook some very important issues. Facts have demonstrated that, while emphasizing the issue of verification, it is also necessary to accord due importance to such issues as the complete prohibition of the use and the thorough and unconditional destruction of chemical weapons; assistance; undiminished security, and old chemical weapons, giving them priority, or at least discussing in parallel. Otherwise we may commit the mistake of evading

(Mr. Hou, China)

important matters to dwell on trivia or, as the Chinese saying goes, "dropping a melon to pick up a sesame seed". Certainly, we should prevent such things from happening.

Finally, the principle of equality, fairness and mutual respect should be abided by in our co-operation and negotiations. Consisting of a great number of United Nations member States, the CD and its subsidiary bodies should follow the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations in their work. Rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the CD stipulates explicitly that "All member States of the Conference shall take part in its work in conditions of full equality as independent States, in accordance with the principle of sovereignty enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations". Represented here are both developed and developing countries; both European countries and countries from other continents; both countries belonging to the two military blocs and non-aligned countries and countries not belonging to any group. In a word, we have here countries coming from all points of the compass: north and south, east and west, which, due to their different historical and cultural backgrounds and different social systems and ideologies, are bound to have different views and opinions on certain issues. This is nothing but normal. The crux of the question is to co-operate widely on a basis of the principle of independence, mutual respect and sovereign equality, to respect and adopt a correct approach to views and opinions that are different from one's own and to preclude the introduction of political and ideological differences into the work of the CD. In this spirit we can improve our work and keep up with the trend of democratization prevailing in international relations. The Chinese delegation will, as always, co-operate with all other delegations and make concerted efforts to work for the early conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons.

Looking back upon the past and the serious problems we have faced, it is sometimes unavoidable for us to have some complaints and experience a sense of disappointment. However, when we look into the future and remind ourselves of the important mission and responsibilities entrusted to us, we have every reason to be confident. As pointed out by a famous American, "We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope". We also appreciate the remark of England's Samuel Johnson: "Where there is no hope, there can be no endeavour". We also share the optimism of Maupassant as expressed in his famous dictum, "Man lives in hope". With high hopes let us brace ourselves to meet the new opportunities and challenges lying ahead.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of China, Ambassador Hou, for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair, the chairmen of the subsidiary bodies and secretariat of the Conference.

Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I see none. May I now then as President of the Conference make my closing statement.

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, we have now reached the end of the 1990 session of the Conference on Disarmament. The final plenary meetings have been rich in general surveys from a number of distinguished representatives. That makes my task easier.

(The President)

This year has been marked by unprecedented, fundamental developments in international life, by important rethinking of political, strategic and military concepts and doctrines. As for the Conference on Disarmament, the signs of increased interest on the part of the international community have grown in number. Suffice it to recall the substantial number of representatives of Governments who have come to address us or have sent messages to the Conference.

In this context, during six months of intensive work certain steps and developments have been made in the Conference. As to the specific, immediate results that have been achieved, it must be recognized, as many people have already pointed out, that the session has been frustrating in some ways, whether as regards the negotiations on the draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, or with respect to all the nuclear disarmament issues, the prevention of an arms race in outer space or other important items on the Conference's agenda.

I would like to confine myself to a few points concerning possibilities and constructive, forwarding-looking approaches. With respect to the negotiations on a convention for the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons, following a focusing of effort which warranted more significant results, it remains for us to hope that, since we now have a better knowledge of the key issues remaining to be resolved and the interests and positions that have to be taken into account, we shall be able, with the necessary political will, to make substantial progress in the near future. With respect to nuclear issues, maximum advantage must be taken of the steps made towards the elaboration of a more structured framework for a substantive debate - I am referring, of course, to the Ad hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and the special informal meetings on agenda items 2 and 3. In this context, we should note in particular the idea repeatedly expressed here recently that care and action should be taken to maintain and in as far as possible consolidate the consensus on the establishment and operation of an ad hoc committee on item 1 of the Conference's agenda. Generally speaking, providing a framework for consideration and, as appropriate, negotiation on all the questions on the agenda of the Conference must be a priority concern in the future too.

It is no coincidence that we managed to make specific progress at this session as to the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. The practical steps contained in the decision to adapt the rules of procedure to the current needs of the work of the Conference are particularly significant here. To continue and expand the concerns with a view to ensuring better functioning of the Conference in all respects remains a valid objective for the future.

Directing the work of the Conference during this final month of the 1990 session has required in particular the support and contribution of all. I am grateful to you for your invaluable co-operation. I have endeavoured to maintain the spirit of co-operation and the serenity of my eminent predecessors, to ensure the smooth progress of our work and to be fully at the disposal of the Conference.

(The President)

My comments would not be complete without my paying tribute to the exceptional contribution made to our work by the secretariat, the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Komatina, the Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, and all their associates, including the translators and the interpreters. I would like to extend to them on behalf of us all, for the month of August and the entire session, our sincerest thanks.

Lastly, I would like to express the hope that this year's work, our conclusions in the report to the General Assembly of the United Nations and the experience that has been acquired will provide a basis for new dynamism and outstanding results in our future work, giving to it an increased stamp of negotiation in conjunction with genuine political will, full commitment and commensurate with our times, and the requirements of international life.

There are no further items to be considered prior to the closure of this annual session of the Conference on Disarmament. I should just like to remind you first that, pursuant to the decision taken by the Conference at its 575th meeting, the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 22 January 1991, at 10 a.m.

As the Conference agreed when adopting the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons contained in document CD/1033, the Ad hoc Committee will, in accordance with paragraph 14 (c) of that document, hold a session of limited duration during the period 8-18 January 1991. I should also like to announce that open-ended consultations of the Ad hoc Committee will take place between 26 November and 21 December 1990. The first of those meetings will be held at 3 p.m. on 26 November 1990, in room V.

The plenary meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.